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German Jews are withdrawing from the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation

The Central Council of Jews in Germany has suspended its participation in the work of the Board of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation, which is in charge of building the expulsions museum. According to the organisation which represents Jews in Germany, some members of the Foundation's Board propagate 'revanchist views' and do not guarantee that the institution will be functioning in a reliable way.

The decision of the Central Council of Jews was announced by Stephen Kramer, the organisation's secretary general, in a letter sent on 6 September to Bernd Neumann, the federal government commissioner for culture and the media. Through this the organisation protested against the participation in the foundation's board of two members of the Federation of Expellees, Arnold Tölg and Hartmut Sänger, whose views, according to the Central Council of Jews, are likely to prevent the fulfilment of the foundation's primary goal, namely the "commemoration of expulsions in the spirit of truth and reconciliation." Sänger has claimed in one of his articles and in statements for the media that one of the main causes of the outbreak of World War II was Poland's 'aggressive' policy. In turn, Tölg, who was an MP at the local parliament in Baden-Württemberg and has represented the CDU for more than two decades, has strongly criticised the payment of damages to former forced labourers of Nazi Germany. The Central Council of Jews has reserved the option to totally withdraw its representatives from the foundation's authorities.

However, this move may not significantly affect the course of the foundation's work. It is unlikely to suspend its operation, even if the Central Council of Jews carries out its threat. Since the Christian Democrats and the Liberals succeeded in reaching a compromise regarding the composition of the foundation's authorities in February 2010 (at that time Erika Steinbach agreed to withdraw from participation in the board), a reopening of the discussion on this subject would be inconvenient to both the government coalition and the Federation of Expellees. <ciechan>